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Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

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Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General of 26 July 1999 (A/53/1028) on the use of gratis personnel and on the implementation of the phase-out of type II gratis personnel. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided the Committee with additional information and clarifications.

2. The Advisory Committee points out that the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/1028) contains a number of deficiencies with reference to the need for conformity with paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 52/234 of 26 June 1998, in which the Assembly calls for accurate, comprehensive, complete and integrated reports on the subject. More detailed information should have been provided with regard to the 300 gratis personnel for the International Tribunal fo. ..e Former Yugoslavia referred to in paragraph 7 of the report. The Advisory Committee is of the view that information should, from the outset, have been provided on the procedure for selecting gratis personnel, the involvement of the Office of Human Resources Management (which has primary responsibility) in the exercise, the list of Member States that were invited to offer such personnel, the dates of requests to Member States with reference to actual deployment of gratis personnel, the functions performed, the duration of service and specific expertise of each of the gratis personnel. The Advisory Committee was provided, upon request, with some additional information on the issue. Upon enquiry by the Advisory Committee regarding information on one of the addressees, the Assistant Secretary-General for the Office of Human Resources Management submitted the following clarification:

> "I am pleased to confirm that the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has confirmed that, in accordance with the procedure for the acceptance of gratis

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personnel, all Member States were contacted through their permanent missions to the United Nations. The Hong Kong police was not contacted by the Tribunal. However, simultaneously, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) in Lyon volunteered to identify and contact police forces with disaster victim identification capabilities. Among those member police agencies was the police of Hong Kong, China. It is worth noting that the copy of the letter from the police of Hong Kong shows that the letter is addressed to Interpol and not the Tribunal. Hong Kong was subsequently erroneously included by the Tribunal in the list of States. The error is regretted."

3. The Advisory Committee was initially informed that the total number of gratis personnel engaged by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia was 325. The Secretariat subsequently clarified that, according to the Tribunal, at no time did the number of gratis personnel exceed the 300 stipulated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 7 of his report, and that the total number of gratis personnel (325) was due to the fact that forensic teams work on a rotational basis. In addition, some Member States were able to provide teams for relatively short periods of time (e.g. two weeks).

4. The Advisory Committee requests that all future proposals by the Secretary-General on gratis personnel and the subsequent implementation of legislative mandates be in full compliance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and fully respect the relevant policies, procedures and regulations of the Organization. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, there is a need for an effective monitoring system in the Office of Human Resources Management with regard to delegation of authority for gratis personnel to offices away from Headquarters. In that connection the Advisory Committee notes with concern the statement in paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report that information with respect to the situation at the United Nations Environment Programme was still not available at the time of the preparation of his report.

5. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the Secretary-General's report (A/53/1028).